

Hello!

We've finished the March 18, 2014 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecast update. The forecasts include observed conditions through the morning of March 18, 2014 and are posted at <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iidir?s=b120up>.

Forecast Summary:

Considering the rivers forecasted in the B120 update, the projected median April-July runoff in the major Sierra river basins ranges from 11 percent on the Tule River to 53 percent for the Inflow to Shasta Lake. On average, the forecasts have dropped almost 3 percent since our March 11th forecast update. The largest drop (approximately 5 percent) was on the San Joaquin River.

Runoff:

Thanks to precipitation events that affected primarily the northern range in late February and early March, the flows in March have been above or equal to 70 percent of average north of the Cosumnes River. All other rivers in the forecast are flowing at a rate less than 50 percent of average, except for the Mokelumne (57 percent of average). All rivers south of the Tuolumne River are flowing at rates less than 35 percent of average for the month of March.

Precipitation:

It has been a dry week. No significant precipitation was measured in the Northern Sierra 8-Station index nor the San Joaquin 5-Station index.

As of March 18, the March and Water Year totals for the Northern Sierra 8-Station index remain at 5.7 inches (83 percent of the March average) and 20.9 inches (42 percent of the Water Year average and 54 percent of average for the date), respectively.

As of March 18, the March and Water Year totals for the San Joaquin 5-Station index remain at 2.9 inches (48 percent of the March average) and 13.2 inches (32 percent of the Water Year average and 42 percent of average for the date), respectively.

Snowpack:

The snow has been melting/subliming over the past week as the average statewide snowpack has diminished by almost an inch. As of March 18, 2014, the snow sensor data indicates that the Northern Sierra, Central Sierra, and Southern Sierra snowpack are now at 16, 31, and 28 percent of their April 1 averages, respectively. The statewide snowpack stands at 7.4 inches, or 26 percent of the April 1 average. With the decrease in snow, the snowpack has dipped to equal to or below 1977 snow levels for this date in all three Sierra regions.

Weather and Climate Outlook:

The forecast for the next 6 days shows another dry week statewide with some precipitation (less than a half inch) showing on the 6th day from the North Coast to the Feather basin. During this period, freezing elevations are expected to vary between 7,000 and 11,000 feet over the Sierra Nevada.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) one-month (valid for April) and three-month (April through June) outlooks were both updated this morning (March 20). Both forecasts suggest above average temperatures and below normal precipitation for the entire state over those months.

El Nino/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are currently neutral. ENSO-neutral conditions are expected to persist through the Northern Hemisphere Spring 2014, with about a 50% chance of El Niño developing during the summer or fall.

Next Update:

The next Bulletin 120 Update for conditions on March 25, 2014 will be available on March 27, 2014.

If you have any questions regarding this forecast, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff. We are happy to help.